



Department of Justice

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Western District of Kentucky**

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LOUISVILLE MAN SENTENCED TO 10 YEARS FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING AND POSSESSION CHARGES AS WELL AS WEAPONS VIOLATIONS

– Routine traffic stop leads to discovery of crack cocaine, firearm

LOUISVILLE, KY - Lee C. Graves, age 31, of Louisville, Kentucky, in Jefferson County, was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for possession of cocaine base with the intent to distribute, possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug crime, illegal possession of a firearm by a user of a controlled substance, as well as illegal possession of marijuana, U.S. Attorney David L. Huber of the Western District of Kentucky and Paul Vido, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Louisville Field Division, jointly announced today. Charles R. Simpson III, Judge, United States District Court, also sentenced Graves to 4 years supervised release. There is no parole in the federal judicial system.

Graves previously pleaded guilty and admitted that on June 29, 2005, he was in possession of approximately 16 grams of a mixture and substance containing a detectable amount of cocaine base, also known as "crack" cocaine, that he possessed with the intent to distribute. Graves also admitted that he possessed a firearm, namely a Keltec 9 mm semiautomatic pistol, serial number 106635 in furtherance of the drug trafficking crime. Graves also admitted that at the time he possessed the firearm, he was a user of marijuana, a controlled substance, and is prohibited on that basis from possessing the Keltec 9 mm semiautomatic pistol

he possessed on June 29, 2005, and that this firearm had traveled in interstate commerce before Graves possessed it. Finally, Graves admitted that on June 29, 2005, he was in possession of approximately 22 grams of marijuana for personal use.

The facts of this case are that on June 29, 2005, an LMPD Officer observed a blue Chevrolet van making a right turn from Norbrook Drive onto Fegenbush Lane in the Norfolk area of Louisville, Kentucky. As the van passed by the officer's patrol car, both the driver and passenger turned their heads around to look at the officer and his police vehicle. The officer turned his police vehicle around and began to follow the van. While doing so, he ran a check of the van's license plate on his in-car computer and determined that the registered owner was defendant Graves. After determining that Graves was the registered owner of the van, the officer ran Graves' name through another database, CourtNet, which displayed an unserved arrest for Graves. Acting on the knowledge that the registered owner of the van was wanted on an arrest warrant, the officer pulled the van over and asked the driver for identification. The officer could see the passenger in the vehicle but did not see any weapons in the van while standing by the van talking to Graves. After confirming that Graves was in fact the driver, the officer informed him that there was an outstanding felony warrant for his arrest. The officer then took Graves into custody on the warrant and then began to search Graves' vehicle.

A Keltec 9mm handgun, a bag containing 23 grams of marijuana and a set of electronic scales were discovered in the drivers' seat magazine holder on the back of the driver's seat. A drug detection dog was called to come to the scene to assist in the search of the van since controlled substances had been discovered inside. The canine search resulted in the discovery of approximately 16 grams of crack cocaine concealed under the center console of the van. Graves was found to have \$385.00 in his possession. Graves admitted to the officer that he was a marijuana user and smoked marijuana regularly. When questioned about the crack cocaine,

Graves stated that it must be his because it was in his vehicle. The estimated street value of the crack cocaine is at least \$1,600.

This is a Project Backfire prosecution. Project Backfire is a cooperative effort by the Jefferson County Attorney's Office, the Jefferson County Commonwealth's Attorneys Office, the Louisville Metro Police Department, ATF and the United States Attorney's Office to ensure that firearm offenses are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the state and federal law.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Thomas W. Dyke. The Louisville Field Office of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) conducted the investigation in partnership with the Louisville Metro Police Department, as part of ATF's mission to reduce violent crime and other threats to public safety.

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